

*And remind (others), for the reminder most certainly benefits the Believers
Surah Zhaariyaat, verse 55*

Q AND A ON COVID-19 REPERCUSSIONS

Covid-19 is a code word for Coronavirus.

Q: In view of the Government's declaring a National State of Disaster, and subsequently issuing guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus, do we Muslims have to follow these guidelines and interventions?

A: Islam allows us to adopt measures and methods of prevention against disease, as long as these are not contrary to Shariah. So follow the guidelines given by the Government and medical experts. That will be permissible. However, let this not result in violation of important laws and major tenets of Islam. Furthermore, don't believe that these measures will save one from illness or death. If Allah decrees illness or death for anyone, all the protective means and measures in the world cannot save him or her. The Ultimate Cause of all benefit and harm is Allah. The Holy Quran states: **Say (O Muhammed): Even if you stayed inside your houses, those upon whom death was written, would (be forced to) go out to the places where they are destined to die"** (Surah Aala Imraan, verse 157)

Q: Is it permissible to leave out the Jumu'ah salaah since the government has prohibited large gatherings? What's the ruling on the five daily jamaat salaah?

A: It is haram to stop the five daily jamaat salaah, or the Jumu'ah salaah. The current virus scare that is circulating is not a valid reason for closing down Masaajid. Those who have opted to go this un-Islamic route have grossly erred in their understanding of Shariah. In a crisis, the go-to place is the Musjid. They have done the exact opposite by locking down masaajid. Even the government has not asked for mosques to be closed! So what exactly are these people trying to achieve? Our Complaint is only to Allah!

Q: Should the masjid jamaats be limited to 100 people or less, as decreed by the Government?

A: This, too, is not permissible. It is wrong to block or ban people from coming to the Musjid. Again, the virus scare is not a valid reason to do so. If the State enforces this decree with fines and/or jail sentences, then we have no option but to abide by it and adjust our namaazes accordingly. In such cases, we should arrange alternate venues for Jumu'ah salaah, or have more than one Jumu'ah in one Musjid by rotation of

musallees. It is also permissible to have more than one Jumu'ah conducted simultaneously in one precinct. For example, one Jumu'ah jamaat in the Musjid, another in classrooms surrounding the Musjid, another in another classroom, and so forth. This concession is based on matters that are beyond our control.

Q: Can more than one jamaat be performed in one Musjid?

A: This is not permissible. If a Musjid usually gets more than 100 musallees for daily jamaat salaah, then again, due to the imposition by the government, such a Musjid is allowed to have two jamaat namaazes, one after the other. This is purely out of necessity and is not the original Shar'ee ruling.

Q: There is a post going around that states: "Attending prayer in congregation is fard kifayah. Shaking hands is Sunnah. Preserving human life is fard 'ain." Is this correct and should we forward this post?

A: This post is incorrect and highly deceptive. Please do NOT forward. Jamaat salaah is wajib 'alal-ain, meaning wajib upon every baaligh male. Shaking hands is indeed a Sunnah, but to abandon a Sunnah for the fear of some invisible virus is makrooh and sinful. Do we not believe that good health and sickness comes from Allah? This excuse is too flimsy to neglect a Sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Tomorrow scientists might claim that the miswaak carries some bacteria and should be abandoned. Our iemaan does not allow us to stoop to this level. As for preservation of human life, it seems the author of this post believes that by adopting these measures, we are preserving human life. What guarantee does he or she have that anyone will die from the virus after contracting it? So by not shaking hands, how is one "preserving" human life? Furthermore, the irony of it all is that some medical experts have rejected the notion that virus can be spread by hand-shakes.

Q: Is it permissible to use hand sanitizers that contain alcohol?

A: It is permissible to use such sanitizers, because the alcohol that is used in sprays and sanitizers are industrial. However, it is better to wash the hands after using the sanitizer, before offering salaah.

Q: Musjids are practicing "social distancing" by asking musallees to stand 2 metres apart in the saffs. Is this allowed?

A: This is not allowed. It is makrooh tahreemi (forbidden) to leave large gaps in the saffs. There is no valid Shar'ee reason for doing this. The threat of contracting a virus is not enough justification to alter the arrangement of sufoof in jamaat salaah.

Allah Ta'ala knows best

In our next edition, we shall describe things that Muslims need to do in a crisis of this nature, insha Allah